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Ladies and Gentlemen:

I write you today in strong support of maintaining essential air service subsidy (EAS) eligibility for scheduled commercial air service to and from Kirksville Regional Airport (IRK) in Kirksville, Missouri.

Currently, Corporate Airlines, flying under American Connection banner, flies ten nonstop roundtrips each week between Kirksville Regional Airport and Lambert Field in St. Louis. This flight link is vital to serving innumerable organizations in north-central Missouri, including A.T. Still University of Health Sciences and Truman State University. Also reliant on dependable, rapid and affordable air transportation are the scores of regional residents now using American Connection for business and personal travel.

Without question, the hosting of scheduled commercial flight service is an economic development asset much-sought after by communities across the nation. A number of facets in business, trade and commerce directly interrelate to commercial air service, which is a prime mover in improving a host of quality-of-life aspects.

Also of note is the thin margin by which Kirksville commercial air service operations exceed federal guidelines for subsidies. Heightened local and regional support, coupled with the trending return of airline ridership to pre-9/11 levels, will surely bring the equation back into balance in short order.

In short, when measured by any number of socio-economic standards, scheduled commercial air service clearly returns many times more than subsidy funds invested.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Cauthorn
State Senator
District 18

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